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ERROR MESSAGES AND THEIR MEANINGS

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The following table of error messages and their meanings can help when you are diagnosing computer problems.

Error Message	Meaning of the Error Message and What to Do
Bad sector writing or reading to drive	Sector markings on the disk may be fading. Try ScanDisk or reformat the disk.
Bad command or file not found	The DOS command just executed cannot be interpreted, or DOS cannot find the program file specified in the command line. Check the spelling of the filename and check that the path to the program file has been given to DOS.
Beeps during POST	Before the video is checked, during POST, the ROM BIOS communicates error messages with a series of beeps. Each BIOS manufacturer has its own beep codes, but the following are examples of some BIOS codes. For specific beep codes for your system board, see the Web site of the system-board manufacturer.
One single beep followed by three, four, or five beeps	System-board problems, possibly with DMA, CMOS setup chip, timer, or system bus
Two beeps	The POST numeric code is displayed on the monitor.
Two beeps followed by three, four, or five beeps	First 64K of RAM has errors.
Three beeps followed by three, four, or five beeps	Keyboard controller failed or video controller failed.
Four beeps followed by two, three, or four beeps	Problem with serial or parallel ports, system timer, or time of day
Continuous beeps	Problem with power supply
Configuration/CMOS error	Setup information does not agree with the actual hardware the computer found during boot. May be caused by a bad or weak battery or by changing hardware without changing setup. Check setup for errors.
Insufficient memory	This error happens under Windows when too many applications are open. Close some applications. A reboot may help.
Hard drive not found	The OS cannot locate the hard drive, or the controller card is not responding.

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Fixed disk error	The PC cannot find the hard drive that setup told it to expect. Check cables, connections, power supply, and setup information.
Incorrect DOS version	When you execute a DOS external command, DOS looks for a program file with the same name as the command. It finds that this file belongs to a different version of DOS than the one that is now running. Use the DOS software from the same version that you are running.
Invalid drive specification	The PC is unable to find a hard drive or a floppy drive that setup tells it to expect. Look for errors in setup, or the hard drive may have a corrupted partition table.
Invalid or missing COMMAND.COM	This may be caused by a nonbooting disk in drive A. Remove the disk and boot from drive C. COMMAND.COM on drive C may have been erased or the path could not be found.
No boot device available	The hard drive is not formatted, or the format is corrupted, and there is no disk in drive A. Boot from a floppy and examine your hard drive for corruption.
Non-system disk or disk error	COMMAND.COM or one of two DOS hidden files is missing from the disk in drive A or the hard drive. Remove the disk in drive A and boot from the hard drive. Use the SYS command to restore system files
Not ready reading drive A: Abort, Retry, Fail?	The disk in drive A is missing, is not formatted, or is corrupted. Try another disk.
Numeric codes during POST	Sometimes numeric codes are used to communicate errors at POST. Some examples for IBM XT/AT error codes include:
Code in the 100 range	System-board errors
Code in the 200 range	RAM errors
Code in the 300 range	Keyboard errors
Code in the 500 range	Video controller errors
Code in the 600 range	Floppy drive errors
Code in the 700 range	Coprocessor errors
Code in the 900 range	Parallel port errors
Code in the 1100–1200 range	Async (communications adapter) errors
Code in the 1300 range	Game controller or joystick errors
Code in the 1700 range	Hard drive errors
Code in the 6000 range	SCSI device or network card errors
Code in the 7300 range	Floppy drive errors
Track 0 bad, disk not usable	This usually occurs when you attempt to format a floppy disk using the wrong format type. Check the disk type and compare to the type specified in the format command.

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Write-protect error writing drive A:	Let the computer write to the disk by setting the switch on a 3½-inch disk or removing the tape from a 5¼-inch disk.
Missing operating system, error loading operating system	The MBR is unable to locate or read the OS boot sector on the active partition or there is a translation problem on large drives. Boot from a floppy and examine the hard drive file system for corruption
Unknown error at Post	See the Web site of the system BIOS manufacturer: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AMI BIOS: www.ami.com• Award BIOS and Phoenix BIOS: www.phoenix.com• Compaq: www.compaq.com• Dell: www.dell.com• IBM: www.ibm.com
Error in CONFIG.SYS line xx	There is a problem loading a device driver or with the syntax of a command line. Check the command line for errors. Verify the driver files are in the right directory. Reinstall the driver files.
HIMEM.SYS not loaded, missing or corrupt HIMEM.SYS	HIMEM.SYS is corrupted, not in the right directory, or not the right version for the currently loading OS. Verify HIMEM.SYS.

